

Agenda Item: 13-8

Meeting Date: October 13 and 14, 2004

WATER SUPPLY RELIABILITY OPERATIONS CRITERIA AND PLAN CONSULTATION UPDATE

Summary: The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation in collaboration with the California Department of Water Resources initiated formal Endangered Species Act (ESA) consultation on the Long-Term Central Valley Project and State Water Project Operations Criteria and Plan (OCAP) Biological Assessment and also requested early consultation on operations of specific future facilities and actions in March 2004. Reclamation published the Biological Assessment for OCAP in March 2004 and an updated version was published in June 2004. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service completed the Biological Opinion on Delta Smelt in July 2004 and NOAA Fisheries continues to work on the Biological Opinion for Chinook salmon and steelhead.

Recommended Action: This is an informational item only. No action will be taken.

The following description was provided by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation:

Background

The Operations Criteria and Plan (OCAP) Biological Assessment for the ESA consultation primarily addresses ongoing Central Valley Project and State Water Project operations, and several future changes. Reclamation formally consulted on several new actions, such as Freeport diversion project, municipal and industrial shortage policy, the Trinity Record of Decision flows, and the Delta-Mendota Canal/California Aqueduct Intertie. There was also early consultation (on actions that are not anticipated to be implemented in the immediate future) on the operation of South Delta Improvement Project (SDIP) [the increase to 8,500 cubic feet per second (cfs) at Banks Pumping Plant and South Delta barrier operations] with assumptions for a long-term Environmental Water Account (EWA). Additional consultation under ESA will be required prior to implementing any actions addressed in the early consultation. OCAP consultation essentially analyzes the effects that proposed operation will have on listed species and is not a decision-making process. Decisions on implementing new actions are made in separate project-specific planning/environmental compliance processes.

Formal consultation was initiated March 15, 2004 and the Biological Assessment (BA) was submitted on March 22, 2004. The modeling results of the BA were posted on Reclamation's Mid-Pacific web site on February 2, 2004 and the complete BA was posted on March 22, 2004. The BA was updated in June 2004 and, along with a Central Valley Project OCAP document, was posted on Reclamation's web site. The

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U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service finished the Biological Opinion on Delta Smelt July 30, 2004 and subsequently had it posted on their web site. The NOAA Fisheries consultation continues on salmon and steelhead.

A presentation was made at the Bay-Delta Public Advisory Committee (BDPAC) meeting where it was recommended that an informational workshop be conducted prior to the next Authority meeting. The public informational meeting on OCAP consultation is currently scheduled to take place on Thursday, October 7, from 9 a.m. to 12 noon at the Best Western Expo Inn, located at 1413 Howe Avenue in Sacramento.

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